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THE URU OF THE RIO DESAGUADERO

By WESTON LA BARRE

IN THE giant reed, or *totora* swamps on the eastern or Bolivian bank of the middle Desaguadero, between Lakes Titicaca and Poopo, and shortly downstream from where this river forms the common Peruvian-Bolivian frontier, lives the remnant of a tribe which is in many ways an ethnographic puzzle. They are possibly Arawakan in linguistic affiliation, and their nearest language-congeners lie beyond the farther side of the great inter-Andean (Bolivian) *altiplano* from them, and beyond the eastern, continental Andes or Cordillera Real—viz., scattered in the immense steaming jungle-swamps of the Amazon basin, in the Greater and Lesser Antilles of the Caribbean, and indeed at one time in a sizeable section in the south of the state of Florida. They form a distinct linguistic enclave in the midst of enormous territories of Quechua- and Aymará-speaking peoples. How the ancestors of this vanishing tribelet ever came to the extreme western border of the lofty, raw, cold, barren, and wind-swept *altiplano* from their tropical jungles is an absorbing anthropological riddle.[1]

Location. According to Polo, the Uru language at the end of the Nineteenth Century was still spoken in the following scattered places: *Akaallo mayu*, some 20 km. from Ancoaqui and 40 km. from Lake Titicaca; *Ancoaqui*, on the left[2] bank of the Desaguadero, 23 km. from Lake Titicaca *Iruito*, some 12 km. from the mouth of the Desaguadero (s. lat. 16°31'40"),

[1] The present sketch is believed to be the unique ethnographic account of the Uru in English. Former notices of this interesting and obscure group have been confined to one or two lines which barely identify them. The colonial Spanish literature, unfortunately, is almost wholly silent on the subject of the Uru, but all available references to them have been carefully checked and utilized in the present summary. In Spanish we have Posnansky's brief and somewhat disappointing notes. In French there is the linguistic work of Métraux, who visited the Uru for a week in 1935 with the purpose of compiling a comparative Uru-Chipaya dictionary. Métraux' incidental ethnographic notes on the Uru are excellent, and undoubtedly our best source on the tribe. As the Uru are today almost wholly extinct, though important to our general knowledge of South American ethnography, it is to be deplored that they have been so little known to English-speaking students.

[2] Métraux, *Contribution au folk-lore andin* (Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris 28, p. 75) is in minor error in locating this *communidad* on the right bank of the Desaguadero.

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Nenacora, 64 km. from Lake Titicaca and 23 km. from Ahuallamaya, a little n. of 17° s. lat.; *Simiáque*, an islet in the Peruvian Desaguadero, 6 km. from the village of the same name (nearly all the natives here, however, spoke Aymará); and *Sojapata*, 5 km. from the village of Desaguadero, in Peruvian territory (this is spoken of as "the habitual residence of the Uros"; it is an *estancia* where some cattle are bred). Polo adds further that "In 1873 there existed the Uro *haciendas* of *Chcaraque*, *Taguan*, *Tocacatoni*, *Chiconi-uma*, *Mochacomarca*, *Urcuni-uma*, *Huallaquiri*, *Calayampani*, and *Tocani* [all these names are etymologizable in Aymará, save perhaps *Taguan* (W.LaB.)]; and the inhabitants of the Peruvian district of the Desaguadero numbered 937 (males 448, females 489), of whom 809 were Indians." This figure of course includes Aymára, but it is wholly possible that the Uru may have numbered between one and two hundred even this late.[3]

In March 1938[4] the population of Ancoaqui (*koaq'o-haq'e*, Aymará "white people"), a village of the Uru in the midst of an Aymára *communidad* of the same name, was thirty families (in the taxable sense), according to the native who was the *ilacata* (head of the *communidad*,? from "alcalde") for the previous year. This figure probably includes most Uru males past puberty, both in the village and in the surrounding area, and I am inclined to agree with Métraux' estimate of less than a hundred Uru individuals at Ancoaqui and the entire region as well in 1931.[5]

This Aymára *communidad* of Ancoaqui, in the midst of which the Uru town of the same name is located, is one of the largest in the western part of the Provincia of Ingavi. It is about twenty kilometers long, north and south, and about fifteen kilometers wide. In the middle of this, scarcely a foothold on the solid land, the Uru possess a small holding of the village of Ancoaqui and the environs, scarcely amounting in all to a plot with a circumference of a thousand meters.

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[3] José Toribio Polo, *Indios Uros del Perú y Bolivia* (Boletín de la Sociedad Geográfico de Lima, 1901, 10: 445–482), p. 446. D. M. Jimenez de la Espada (in Neveu-Lemaire, *Los lagos de los Altiplanos de la América del Sud*, *La Paz*, 1909, p. lviii) says the Uru were anciently inhabitants of the "Lake of Chucuito." I have been unable to locate this name on available maps; Chucuito, however, was an ancient name for Lake Titicaca, hence I believe this lake is meant.

[4] As Sterling Fellow of Yale University I visited the village for some days, incidental to my main study of Aymára ethnography.

[5] Métraux, *op. cit.*, p. 73. The legal term "communidad" here signifies the presence of the ancient Aymára politico-socio-economic organization of the *ayllu* (which still obtains in the remoter parts of the *altiplano*). The *ayllu* system of land-holding was abolished officially by law in 1874, but not in actuality. "Communidad"—as opposed to the term "finca" (= "estancia," "hacienda") where formerly free natives are now serfs to white owners who have usurped their *ayllu* lands—also implies that the native culture is more intact in places so-named.

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Environment. The Rio Desaguadero, as its name implies, is the outlet of Lake Titicaca and flows roughly south to Lake Poopo.[6] Near the lake, where uptilted strata testify to a major geological upheaval at some time in the past, the river flows relatively swiftly through the rocky gate, but on reaching a broad valley between the range of foothills west of the Tiahuanacu plain and a corresponding range in Peru, it slows down considerably. The Desaguadero endlessly bifurcates as the river reaches the Uru swamps. The giant *totora*-reeds stretch higher than a man's head, and clumps of these are alive with numerous and almost tame waterfowl of many varieties, which apparently have never been hunted other than with *bolas*. In the clear, cold water of the river, dozens of varieties of water plants can be seen waving in the current, and in and out of these can be seen darting abundant fish—although these last belong to only about four or five varieties. Near the village half-wild cattle can be heard and occasionally seen plunging through the swampy shallows to eat the succulent white roots of the *totora* (the Uru have scant mainland pasturage for cattle or llamas). In the mountains back of their lands are pumas and vicuñas, but nearby there are only *viscachas* (a bushy-tailed, rabbit-eared rodent of the chinchilla family), the *altiplano* fox (Aymará *q'amaq'e*), and the domesticated guinea-pig.

The stony, dry soil at this altitude, when uncultivated, bears only *t'ola*, a kind of greasebrush used as a fuel, as is also *yareta*, a low, gray-green, semisubterranean mass suggesting a large, woody, resinous cauliflower; and a few small-flowered herbs. The altitude of the Uru country is about 12,000 feet, hence, though it is not far south of the Equator, the air is cold and rare. The rainy season, from late November to early March, comprises the summer. Although the middle of the day can be more than uncomfortably warm

[6] The best way to reach the Uru is to proceed northwest from Guaqui, on Lake Titicaca, by land over a small range of mountains or by water on the Lake, to the little village of Desaguadero, which straddles the river of that name at its head, being thus in both Peruvian and Bolivian territory. *Balsas* are the only means of transportation on the river, and it is imperative to secure experienced rivermen as guides through the elaborate waterways of the swamps in the middle Desaguadero. Storms on the river and the temporary loss of a baggage-*balsa* in the swamp made it for me, my one half-breed and two native companions, a two-day trip, though it should normally be made in one long day's travel. Instead of boating laboriously upstream on the return trip to the Lake, one may go by land cross-country north of Jesus de Machaca. The cold, dry winds from the mountains in this region speedily entail the minor inconvenience of chapped and bleeding lips, and in certain seasons it is a nuisance to find in travelling that rivers on which one had been depending for drinking water have dried up. Weapons, with which I stupidly neglected to provide myself, are probably more nearly necessary in this region than elsewhere in the *altiplano*. Bandelier noted cannibalism near Sajama in 1898, and according to Bolivian authorities, the flesh of murdered whites was so employed during native uprisings as late as 1923 in this Jesus de Machaca region.

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in summer when the sun is shining, the temperature in this relatively dry region invariably falls quite low in the cold nights, necessitating a sleeping-bag and heavy blankets. Winters are bitterly cold: this period lasts from June to November, the "dry season." Morning mists are common, and electrical storms are frequent in summer, as is hail, but the winter snows are comparatively light.

Linguistic Identification. The Uru have been the source of a long and intricate scholarly debate, which is by no means adequately settled yet. In 1607 the missionary Geronimo de Ore published in Naples a famous, but rare book, his *Rituale seu Manuale Peruanum*. This contains about thirty pages in the "Puquina" tongue, with translations into Aymará, Quechua, Spanish, and Latin. The only specimen of this language in modern works was the Paternoster from Ore printed by Hervas, until Brinton published extracts from Ore's Puquina rendering, and the numerals from one to ten. On the basis of the Paternoster alone, Hervas believed that the Puquinan was an entirely separate stock. Adelung-Vater, however, copying Hervas' quoted Paternoster, came to the opposite conclusion, inclining to believe that it was related to Aymará. This opinion was fully adopted by Sir Clements Markham, who declared Puquinan "a very rude dialect of the Lupaca" (a sub-tribe of the Aymára). He was followed in this by von Tschudi.[7]

These authorities, to be sure, had only the Hervas Paternoster from Ore's *Rituale*. It is evident that neither Hervas, Adelung-Vater, Markham, nor von Tschudi had ever seen Ore's original work, since all of them believed that the Lord's Prayer was the only "Puquina" extant in print—whereas thirty pages are to be found in the *Rituale* with translations. However, whether or not Puquina be finally equated with Uru, one thing seems certain: neither one is basically related to the Aymará stock, regardless of extensive borrowings from both Aymará and Quechua. Comparison of the Puquina numerals in Brinton indicate that they are quite independent of both Aymará and Quechua. Brinton himself, with complete appropriateness remarks:

> It remains puzzling to me why the Puquina, which seems to have been spoken only by a few wretched villagers about Lake Titicaca, should have been classed by writers in the sixteenth century as one of the *lenguas generales* of Peru. Not only does Ore refer to it by this term, but in one of the official *Relaciones Geograficas*

[7] Daniel G. Brinton, *Note on the Puquina Language of Peru* (Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 28, 1890) pp. 242–248; Adelung, Vater, et al., *Mithradates*, Vol. 3 (Berlin, 1806–17), pp. 2, 548–550; Clements R. Markham, *On the Geographical Position of the Tribes which Formed the Empire of the Yncas* (Journal of the Royal Geographic Society 41: 281–338, 1871), p. 305; J. J. von Tschudi, *Organismus der Ketschua Sprache* (Leipzig, 1884), s. 76.

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[*de Indias*, Peru, 1: 82, Madrid, 1881] written in 1582, it is mentioned as "one of the three general languages of the kingdom." This would indicate that at that period it had a wider extension than we can now trace.

Brinton identified the "Puquina" of Ore with the Uru of Lake Titicaca, and has been followed by many authorities since. Raoul de la Grasserie agreed in the identification, giving the synonymy "Puquinas, known also by the name of Urus, Uros, Hunos and Ochomazos, etc." Ehrenreich also lists the "Uro or Puquina" linguistic stock, but notes a discrepancy with de la Grasserie:

> In the midst of the Kolya population there still dwell on Lake Titicaca remains of the much disintegrated Uru or Puquina, an independent group, whose language has recently been investigated by Uhle. The language treated under this name by Raoul de la Grasserie seems to belong to a different peopl:.

Uhle informed Chamberlain in 1896 that the Uros of Iruitu [of the upper Desaguadero] were linguistically identical with those of the interior of Carangas, and concluded that once they probably occupied the region from Lake Titicaca almost to the Argentine frontier; at Iruitu ten men, fourteen women, and nine children still spoke Uru, with little difference from the Carangas dialect. But he too noted that "the Puquina-Uro of Raoul de la Grasserie is totally different from my Uro."[9]

More recently Métraux has done linguistic work with both the Chipaya of Lake Poopo (Carangas) and the Uru of Ancoaqui (Rio Desaguadero). The virtual identity of the two dialects he has well demonstrated, the Uru being purer and less corrupt, perhaps, than the Chipaya, of the group he calls "Uro-Čipaya." Careful comparison of vocabularies in Métraux with my own and Polo's make it clear that:

1. The Uru of Lake Titicaca and Rio Desaguadero and the Chipaya of Carangas form one linguistic stock.

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[9] Daniel G. Brinton, *The American Race* (New York 1891), pp. 223–224. Raoul de la Grasserie, *Langues Américaines: Langue Puquina, Textes Puquina Contenus dans le Rituale seu Manuale Peruanum de Geronimo de Ore* (publié à Naples en 1607 avec texte espagnol en regard, traduction analytique interlinéaire, vocabulaire et essai de grammaire, Leipzig, 1894), p. 67. (De la Grasserie used a copy in the Bibliothèque Nationale; Brinton, according to Chamberlain, used a British Museum copy of Ore.) Paul Ehrenreich, *Die Ethnographie Südamerikas im Beginn des XX Jahrhunderts unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Naturvölker* (Archiv für Anthropologie N. F. 3: 39–75, 1905), p. 65. Uhle, personal letter, dated Lima, May 17, 1896; cited in Alexander F. Chamberlain, *The Uron: A New South American Linguistic Stock* (American Anthropologist 12: 417–424, 1910), p. 418, from which this résumé is taken. See also M. Uhle, *Reisen in Bolivia und Peru* (Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin, Verhandlung 23, 1896), pp. 357–360; *idem*, *Ueber die Sprache der Uros in Bolivia* (Globus 69, 1896), p. 19.

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197 2. The Uru-Chipayan stock is unrelated to either Quechua or Aymará, so far as is determinable from the heretofore solely lexical evidence; the phonemic systems of Aymará and Uru, for what this evidence is worth, seem quite wholly distinct.

114 197 802 3. There is an as yet unexplained misunderstanding concerning Raoul de la Grasserie's "Puquina-Uro." The basis for this last judgment is, in part, the numerical systems:[9]

English	*Quechua*	*Aymará*	*Puquina*	*Uru*
One	huc	maya	pesc	či
Two	iscay	paya	so	Bisk
Three	quimsa	kimsa	capa	ček
Four	tahua	pusi	sper	Ba'Bi'
Five	pichka	pesqa	tacpa	ta'snuku
Six	soccta	soxta	chichun	taxčuku
Seven	canchis	paqalqo	stu	Doko
Eight	pusacc	kimsaqalqo	quina	onko
Nine	iscon	jatunka	checa	san'Gu
Ten	chunca	tunka	scata	kalo

Polo's numerals for the Uru, quoted in Chamberlain, even less resemble Ore's Puquina (shi; piske; chep; pácpic, páctic; pacnucu; pacchui; tohoco; cohonco; sankau; kalo) than do my recordings, and neither Puquina nor Uru resembles Aymará or Quechua.

114 197 There remains, however, the vexing problem of the identity of the Uru and Puquina of Brinton, Ehrenreich, Uhle, Hervas, and Adelung-Vater. Métraux, following Rivet and De la Grasserie, has brought impressive evidence of their identity. He writes: "The Uro gave me decisive proof. They call their language *bakina*, *pakina* to distinguish it from Aymará. This fact had already been brought to my attention at La Paz; it was later confirmed for me by all my informants." Chamberlain, however, thoroughly convinced by Polo's vocabularies, argued the absolute distinctness of Puquina and Uru, and has followed Eric Boman in stating that they are separate stocks

[9] Quechua quoted unchanged from Brinton, *American Race*, p. 223; Aymará from my own field notes; Puquina from Geronimo de Ore, *Rituale*, in Brinton *op. cit.*; and Uru from my own *hanq'o-hanq'e* notes. Since I am not wholly familiar with Uru, the rendering aims more for phonetic accuracy than phonemic economy. The vocabulary, moreover, embodies the considerable language difficulties of having passed from Uru through Aymara and Spanish (the two languages of my interpreter et Ancuaqui) to the present English. Other references in this paragraph are to Alfred Métraux, *Les Indiens Uro-Čipaya de Carangas*, (JSAP 27, 1935), pp. 111–128, 325–415; (JSAP 28, 1936), pp. 155–287, 337–394; *idem*, *Contribution à l'ethnographie et à la linguistique des Indiens Uro d'Ancoaqui* (Bolivia) (JSAP 29) pp. 75–110; *idem*, *Contribution au folk-lore andin* (JSAP 26, 1934), pp. 67–102. Polo, *op. cit.* in Chamberlain (American Anthropologist 12: 417–34, 1910), pp. 412–413.

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(but further complicating the matter by bringing in the dispute about the possible relationship of Atacameñan and Uran, which relationship he finally denies).[9] The problem, of course, awaits the attention of the linguistic specialist who shall have complete access to all the documents in the case. Garcilaso de la Vega, it is true, in his *Historia General de las Indias* listed "the Puquinas, Collas, Urus, Yuncas, and other Indian nations." But the Colla and Yunca were subdivisions of the Aymará-speaking stock, which weakens Chamberlain's citation of this as proof of the distinctness of the Uru and the Puquina. *Prima facie* evidence suggests that they are the same; meanwhile, where are we to find any considerable group in the Lake Titicaca region to have spoken the non-Aymará, non-Quechua "lengua general" of "Puquina" *except* the linguistically moribund and heavily Aymarized Uru-Chipaya?[10]

Name. The present-day Uru of the Rio Desaguadero have been given various names by chroniclers and ethnologists. De la Grasserie gives the synonymy *Uras*, *Uros*, *Huaos*, and *Ochozumos*, as well as the controversial "Puquinas"; Calancha, however, gives the name as *Ochozumas*, and Brinton *Ochozomas*. Posnansky says the name of the Uru for themselves is *Uchumi*, and their language *Uchumitaka*; they also call themselves *Kjutsuni*, but never "Uros" or "Puquinas." Métraux, however, found the Ancoaqui Uru

[9] Métraux (JSAP 27, 1936), p. 89. Eric Boman, *Les Antiquités de la Région Andine de la République Argentine* (Paris 1907–1908), pp. 67–73. Boman (p. 72) identifies the Desaguadero Uru with the Changos, also called "Uros," of the Pacific coast farther south, making them the pre-Quechua, pre-Aymará, pre-Yuncan aborigines of the Peru-Bolivia region. Chamberlain thinks they must have been Inca "colonists; so too Brinton (*American Race*, 221) who notes that Oliva (quoted in A. Bastian, *Culturländer des Alten Amerikas* (1878 Berlin, vol. 2), p. 98) reported some of them were found on the coast near Lambayeque. Since "Chanca" was one of the Aymará nicknames for the Desaguadero Uru, this coastal group of "Changos" may indeed be Uru. Winsor, *The American Indian*, 2nd ed. pp. 312–313, lists and maps a northern "Puquinan" stock and a southern "Uran" stock; but on the linguistic map of South America (Fig. 82) he places "Puquinan" north of Lake Titicaca, and "Uros" in northern Chile, apparently following Boman on this point.

[10] The possible Arawakan affiliation of the Uru-Chipaya is another matter. Rivet and Crequi-Montfort have discussed this problem at length. Métraux (JSAP 27), pp. 402–403, suggests connections of the Chipaya with the Chané and the Arawakanized Chiriguano, on the basis of mosmorphic characters in myths; but he further suggests the possibility that both the Chané and the Chiriguano got their mythical figures from the Aymará-Quechua general Andean folklore, as well as from the Uru-Chipaya. This second direction of diffusion appears to me more plausible: the myths Métraux (JSAP 26, 1934), pp. 67–102, collected from the Uru-Chipaya are nearly all taken identical with those of the neighboring Aymara. It is my opinion, however, that neither Nordenskiöld's nor Métraux' myth material is sufficiently specific in reference to bear any such burden of proof; some of them show Asiatic, Siberian, Shamanic, and Nootka parallels, *i.e.*, the data are pan-American, indeed, proto- and pre-American.

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calling themselves "Bukina" or "Pukina," which agrees with the synonymy of Ehrenreich, Hervas, *et al.* The "*Uroquillas*" of the early chroniclers appears to have meant the Uru; but Chamberlain's "Urinsaya" is the name of a *moiety*, not of the tribe, and is moreover an Aymará word.

Bertonio, a missionary of the late 16th century, gives the Aymará name, probably opprobrious, "*Kiuchacatati:* Big-livered [People], Nickname of the Puquinas." Chamberlain notes the Quechua name for the Uru as *Yuracare*, but Mossi says their Quechua designation is *Urocolla*. Paredes says the Aymára call the Uru "*Chancumankkeris*" [etymologized by my interpreter as *čanku-manq'eri*, lit. "water-*helecho*-eaters," i.e. eaters of the water-plants of the genera *Myriophyllum*, *Potomogeton*, *Clanaphora*, *Elodea*, and *Chara*] or "Chancu." The tradition was that their ancestors were brought from the Pacific coast by the great Colla or Aymára conqueror, Tacuilla, but the Aymára say that the "*achachila*" or place-deity of the Uru is the swamp itself, much as Mt. Illimani is the place-deity of the Aymára in its region. Neveu-Lemaire[12] says that the Uru were the group from whom the Inca exacted the famous tribute of lice.

Posnansky notes several place-names—Urubamba, Urupampa, Urmiri, Urucollo, Uru-Uru (Oruro), and others—which he believes incorporate the name Uru, but these are etymologizable in Aymará, in which language "uru" means "day," or according to some authorities "worm."[13] Polo suggests the implausible etymology from "uri" (Aymará "unconquered, brave"); but in the 17th century "uro" or "uru" seems to have been in current use in the sense of "dirty, ragged, rustic," etc. A punning proverb, "De indio Uro ningun hombre esta seguro" ("No man is safe from an Uru Indian"), appears to testify to the treachery of an incompletely subjected minority.

Temperament. The temperament of the Uru has been spoken of in no very flattering terms by all who have known them. Acosta said that they were so brutish as not even to have considered themselves human: "Son estos *Uros* tan brutales que ellos mismos no se tienen por hombres." Garcilaso de la Vega called them "rudos y torpes," rude and stupid. Even the

[12] Neveu-Lemaire, *Los Lagos, LX–LXI;* this authority also says that the name of the Departamento of Oruro and its capital city in Bolivia comes from the reduplication "Uru-uru." Other authorities in this paragraph not heretofore listed: Arturo Posnansky, *Antropologia y Sociologia de las Razas Interandinas y de las Regiones Adyacentes* (La Paz, 1937), p. 59; Lvdovico Bertonio, *Vocabulario de la Lengua Aymara*, Iuli (Chucuito) [Peru] 2 vols. 1612 [facsimile edition, J. Platzmann, Leipzig 1869] vol. 2, p. 303; Honorio Mossi, *Diccionario Quechua* (Sucre, 1860); Rigoberto Paredes, *Mitos, Supersticiones y Supervivencias Populares de Bolivia*, 2nd ed. (La Paz, 1936), p. 25.

[13] In connection with the meaning "day" see the myth in Métraux JSAP 27: 305 ff.

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FIG. 1. Uru houses. *Above*, hut with corbelled sod roof; note crude plow at right side of hut and balsa poles by door. *Below*, typical round Uru house with mat roof, Aymára style rectangular house to rear; Desaguadero swamps in the background.

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sympathetic Bertonio lists the Uru in his vocabulary as "Vn nacion de indios despreciados entre todos . . . y de menos entendimiento," Paredes calls them "brotado . . . despreciables, de poco entendimiento, ásperos y zahereños." The Belgian traveller Walle says of them, "The face is lifeless and without expression; it betrays hardly a sign of intelligence." Posnansky writes:

> El Uru no tiene placeres, desconoce ahora el juego. La riza jamás asoma a los labios de su cara inmóvil, sin la menor mímica, tostado por el sol y petrificado por el viento glacial. Hasta sus niños son pusilánimes, apáticos y tristes; acurracados y mudos. . . . Todo el aspecto de los Urus es el de un pueblo amordazado.

Métraux preferred their congeners, the Chipaya, to them as being less morbidly distrustful, suspicious, fearful, brutal, and stupidly avaricious than their neighbors:

> The Uru have a character and a genius as sombre as the Aymara. The stranger who comes to visit them receives a cold, even a slightly hostile welcome on their part. To this illwill is added the unhealthy rapacity of the Aymara and the Bolivians, and finally the apathy and heaviness of spirit which renders the *altiplano* Indian so downright hateful. . . . The last thirty Uru of the Desaguadero rival each other in hostility and distrust before even well-intentioned strangers, and it is scarcely pleasant to sojourn among them.

The present writer, however, after months of field-work with the Aymára, found the Uru vastly more sympathetic than the former truculent, hate-filled group; in my original field notes I have accounted the Uru a "cordial and smiling people . . . rather more vivacious and handsome than the Aymára"[14]

History. Of the history of the Uru almost nothing is known. Their only tradition is that they have lived in their present home immemorially but have been progressively despoiled of their lands by the Aymára. Alcedo, writing in the latter half of the 18th century states that those on the islands in Lake Titicaca had, against their will, been removed to the mainland, where they dwelt in gloomy caves and in holes in the ground covered with reeds. Throughout their history the Uru appear to have been a steadily and rapidly disappearing minority group, subject in turn to the Aymára, Inca, and Spanish.

Language. I did not live with the Uru long enough to learn the language in any sense, or even to control the phonemic system. The utter independ-

[14] J. de Acosta, *Historia de las Indias* (1591), p. 62. Garcilaso de la Vega, *Comentarios Reales de los Incas*, Vol. 7, p. 4. Bertonio, *op. cit.* Vol. 2, p. 380. Paul Walle, *Bolivia* (New York, 1914, tr. Bernard Miall). Posnansky, *op. cit.*, p. 90. Métraux (JSAP 27), p. 89; (28), p. 207.

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ence of this latter, however, is evident to anyone familiar with the Aymará. Inasmuch as the almost unique grammatical sketch of Uru has appeared in a somewhat obscure and inaccessible publication,[15] a summary of the language of this little-known group may be of value to scholars and linguists.

The sounds b, v, d, f, ll, rr and z do not seem to occur in the language of the Uros. The adjective always precedes the noun, and has no mark of gender. The infinitive of the verb has several different terminations, apparently according to the words from which, when secondary, it is derived. Three tenses, present, past, and future, are distinguished by prefixed or suffixed particles, but the material at hand is not sufficient to enable one to settle the whole matter of conjugation, etc. In compound nouns Polo says (p. 480), "the components are arranged in the order which their signification expresses, *e.g. chekere-koche* (shoe), from *chekere* (what is covered), and *koch.* (foot)." The number of Uran words, whose etymology is known is, however, too small to settle this point completely.

The nymerical system of the Uros deserves a few words. There are separate words for 1, 2, 3; then 4, 5, 6, are, respectively, *pácpic*, *paknucu*, *pacchui*, in which a common first element *pac* appears; 7, 8, 9, *tohoco*, *cohonco*, *samaco* (also *sankau*) seem to have a common terminal *-co; kalo*, 10, is unrelated to the other numerals; 11, 12, 13, etc., are *kalosi*, *kalo-pishe; kalo-chep*, etc.; 100 is *kalo-kalo* (also *pac*); and 1000 could be expressed by *kalo-pac*.

Among the principal suffixes in the Uran language are the following:

-ai; in names of male relatives, etc. (*apoi*, fathers; *suhuai*, son; *chichuloi*, brother, etc.)

-chi; in certain names of female relatives, etc. (*achichi*, grandmother; *machi*, daughter; *ushakpischi*, girl).

-ni; in certain adjectives (*chokni*, green; *chikni*, old).

-si; a frequent termination in nouns (*coasi*, water; *maksi*, cigar; *chocsi*, coca; *lucsi*, spoon; *tucsi*, stomach; *potsi*, axe; *chequisi*, lasso; *chici*, moon; *masi*, stone; *pacsi*, bridge.

Among the suffixes of the infinitives are: *-oi*, *-ono*, *-ani*, *-aru*, *-chi*, *-i*, *-ini*, *-k*, *-n-qui*, *-si*, *-u*, *-ui*, etc. There is a negative or privative particle *ono-*, used as a prefix (*e.g. ono- chumi*, "ugly," *i.e.* "not beautiful.") *This particle is also used some times* with nouns (*e.g. ono-karchi-ki* handless.) Incorporation (or at least collocation) of the pronoun in the verb occurs, as, *e.g.*, *lulicunkipec*, "dost thou desire to eat"? This word is derived from *luli*, "to eat"; *cun*, "thou"; and *kipec*, "to desire." The Uran language belongs to the class of American tongues which do not possess grammatical

[15] Polo, in the *Boletin de la Sociedad Geografica de Lima*, 10, 1901, pp. 445-482, from which Chamberlain's, and the present sketch, have largely been taken. Métraux' excellent work is predominantly on the Chipaya of Carangas; Raoul de la Grasserie's "Puquinan" is not undisputedly identifiable with Uru; and Alonzo de Barcena's *Lexica et Praecepta in Quinqne Indorum Linguis* (Lima ?1590), which is said to have contained a sketch of the language, is not known to exist in even a single copy.

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193 gender, know both prefixes and suffixes (but predominantly the latter), and also, in all probability have some forms of incorporation. But more material (texts, etc.) is needed to complete a satisfactory grammatical sketch. Reduplication appears to be not infrequent.

192 [191] All the Uru of Ancoaqui speak Aymará well, though few of them know Spanish. Aymará influence in vocabulary has been pointed out by Métraux.[18] Spanish influence is second in importance in borrowings, and Quechua a poor third: according to my calculations, in Métraux' vocabulary and textual examples identifiable as non-Uran, of 630 total listings of words, 63 or 10% are Aymará, 20 or 3% are Spanish in origin, and only 8 or 1.3% are Quechuan. Polo (page 479) notes four Aymará, perhaps three Quechua, and fourteen Spanish loan-words in Uru.

171 179 *Tribal Relations.* In any case, long contact with the Aymára is to be argued from the many Aymarisms in Uru culture, though of course nearly all of these are common *altiplano* possessions: the chewing of coca, the use of Aymára-like *gorros* or knitted llama-wool "toboggan-" caps for males, the use of *taki* and *t'ola* as fuel (as with all *altiplano* dwellers, including the whites, although there are unexploited coal beds south of Lake Titicaca), use of the *pinkillu*-flute and other musical instruments, the Aymára-like brush-comb and many other articles of material culture, washing the hair in urine, the Aymára modification of colonial Spanish male clothing, the belief in and interpretation of dreams, some family names (e.g. Quispi, Inta), color-names, and vocabulary in general. Save in religion and other aspects of non-material culture, the Uru, like the Chipaya, is little different from general Aymára-Quechua *altiplano* culture, though because of relative isolation the Uru may have preserved elements of this Incaica culture from pre-Spanish times somewhat better than some of these original groups themselves.

144 [149] [178] *Physical Anthropology.* Uru males outnumber the females, and for some time they have been taking wives from among the Aymára. In so long a period of contact with their neighbors of so numerically small a group, much mixture of blood is inevitable; yet the preservation of their language is an earnest of a certain amount of social and biological isolation. Only four [55] [201] *family names were encountered at Ancoaqui: Inta, Salina, Pilo and* Quispi (for taxation purposes family names are used with Spanish given names), hence inbreeding may have intensified racial features otherwise diluted by 142 the occasional intermarriages with the Aymára. The Uru, particularly the younger individuals, have pleasant almond-shaped eyes, with a distinct

[18] Métraux (JSAP 27), pp. 90-110.

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slant. The skin is definitely darker than that of the Aymára. Walle (page 155) thought that the foreheads of the Uru were narrower than those of their neighbors, but much of this I believe may be due to the sometimes striking width at the outer corners of the jaw (see for example, Posnansky's Figure 92). The lips are moderately full; the Uru share in the ancient Amerindian habit of pointing with the lips. The teeth of the fish-eating Uru are whiter and appear less carious than those of the *čuñu*-consuming Aymára (*čuñu* is a preparation of potatoes, with the nitrogenous and liquid matter fermented and frozen and dried out of it). Perhaps because they are fishermen, the Uru are much cleaner than the Aymára and have no such repugnant body odor as they.

The women wash their hair in stale urine, which apparently contains a grease-cutting principle and use an Aymára-type brush-comb in caring for it. The hair, which is of course straight and jet-black, is parted in the middle and worn in two braids back of the shoulder, the ends tied to each other with vicuña- or llama-wool cords so that they do not fall forward when the woman is working or bending over. The men cut the hair very short in quasi-European fashion or cut it in an all-around bang like many of the natives of the Bolivian tropics.

The Uru are shorter even than the short-statured Aymára, so that a European of only moderate height appears to tower over them: the average cannot be much more than five feet for adult males. They do not have the grotesquely disproportionate long torso and short legs of the Aymára; indeed, in spite of their short stature, their legs appear to be well-proportioned and even relatively longer than those of *altiplano* inhabitants in general. The most striking difference from the neighboring Aymára is in the nose: the Uru nose is relatively small, and depressed at the root, while the Aymára nose is unqualifiedly enormous in all dimensions and continues the line of the forehead in many cases.

The bodies of the Uru are sturdy and graceful, but not so heavily and conspicuously muscled as the Aymára; this is undoubtedly due in part to their different modes of life, on the water and on the land, respectively. The younger women are well-formed and attractive by any standards. Even in so small a group I noticed one little girl spin her distaff left-handedly. The Uru appear to be healthier than the Aymára, possibly because of a more varied diet, but they have a skin disease which they call *tututin*. No adequate osteometry or craniometry has ever been done for this group.

Clothing. Anciently, it is said,[17] the Uru "vivian desnudos del todo," but this unsupported statement is flatly incredible to anyone who knows the

[17] In Vienna-Lemaire, *Las Lagos*, p. LXI.

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bitterly cold winters of the Bolivian plateau (second only in height to the Himalayan plateau of Tibet), and the cold nights even in summer at this altitude. The essential male costume, as we know the Uru, was the same as the pre-Columbian Chipaya *iro* (Aymará *unku*), a sleeveless, sack-like garment made of an untailored textile, sewed partway up the sides with openings for the arms, and partway across the top with an opening for the neck. This was woven of llama-yarn on simple bar looms held by stakes on the ground. (The Chipaya, like the Aymára, have foot-looms of a crude sort borrowed from the colonial Spaniards; so too have the Uru.)

This garment was at one time the common garment for *altiplano* natives, but only the Chipaya and Uru have retained it. Although nowadays Uru men wear trousers (*makči*) of Aymára cut, slit at the heel (after the fashion of colonial Spanish trousers) and made of native homespun, children still wear this "camiseta" (Aymará *almiła*), and Posnansky made a collection of these ancient garments for the Tiahuanacu Museum in La Paz. Nowadays a homemade shirt, *kulči*, and sometimes a crude vest, with leather sandals (but usually the feet are bare), a knit llama-wool *gorro* (Uru *škara*) with ear-flaps in Aymára fashion, and sometimes a crude Aymára-made felted hat (Uru *iktara*), complete the male costume. The belt called *časi* is not always worn. Thick wool ponchos (*kutsi*) are also worn on occasion.

Uru women wear black llama-wool skirts (*akso*), girdled at the waist, and untailored bodices pinned at each shoulder at the top with a large copper or bronze Aymára pin. This tunic is called *urku*, but clothing in general is called *skiti*, "skin, hide"—which suggests an earlier, non-textile material. The feet are usually bare, but dark-brown or black wimples or shawls of llama-wool are worn when travelling, over the head in the Aymára fashion, but without the added hat on top. The dark color of the women's clothes in this whole southwestern region of Lake Titicaca is said to be because they are "mourning for the last Inca,"—which would not necessarily be so for the Uru! The ancient head-dress of many small braids, still rarely encountered, is called *čočo*. This fashion is pre-Columbian, to judge from mummies in the La Paz museum.

Houses. Although some of the habitations in Ancoaqui are of the Aymára rectangular style, the majority are round in ground-plan, built in horizontal courses of rectangular turfs (much as the ancient tombs or *'ulpas* of Incasica times), the outside wall often being secondarily plastered with adobe-like mud. The door always faces east, and is closed at night by a thick bunch-element twined *totora*-reed door. On the rectangular houses the roof is made of single-element *totora*-reed mats, twined at the ends, and laid so that the reeds are parallel vertically, along the slope of the roof

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(Aymára rectangular houses are *ičU*-grass thatched, not matted in the Uru fashion). Possibly because of the scarcity of wood, "rafters" in the roof are made of thick bundles of reeds, the main supports laid east and west, with secondary supports arched north and south. Some of the round houses have a roof framework made of bent sticks laid at right angles and grass-rope lashed at their crossings. On this framework of wood or *totora*-bundles large mats, employing the full lengths of these giant reeds, are laid in two sections, so that there is a sort of pseudo-ridge to the roof, running from over the door to the west wall; this ridge is made by the meeting of the butts of the reeds. Grass ropes are laid over these mats to hold them down in the wind, and tied to wooden pegs in the mud walls of the house. There is no smoke-hole save the door, so the roof mats become speedily coated with soot and are quite waterproof. One must stoop in entering the door, but a man can stand upright in the center of the house. A mud "stove" is placed to the right (north) of the door, in which *t'ola* (a kind of grease-brush), *yareta* (woody, turf-like masses of a semi-subterranean shrub), or *takia* (llama-dung) are burned for fuel, owing to the absence of wood in the region. The cord used on the roof-mats to twine the ends of the single reed elements, is true two-element twisted rope, the torque of the twisted strands of wiry grass holding the whole together. The rope used in binding *balsas*, on the other hand, is of tightly plaited grass, possibly because the more laboriously made plaited grass rope has greater strength and durability than the twisted kind.

Anciently, according to the 18th century writer Alcedo, the Uru lived in caves and holes in the ground, but they share the round type of house with their congeners the Chipaya. The same round house type is seen elsewhere scatteredly in the *altiplano*. Forbes noted "beehive" houses in out-of-the-way places, and in the 16th and 17th century descriptions such as that of Cobo are indications that the round hut was the original Aymára style. Métraux noted round mud houses with corbelled domes like those of the Chipaya, at Krulliri, near Toledo; and villages of round houses may be seen the west of the railroad halfway between La Paz and Oruro.[16]

[16] David Forbes, *On the Aymara Indians of Bolivia and Peru* (Journal Ethnological Society of London, Vol. 2: 193–305, 1870), p. 255. Posnansky, *op. cit.* p. 69, also says the Uru formerly lived in caves or holes dug in the ground, and roofed with mats. Bernabé Cobo, *Historia del Nuevo Mundo*, 4 vols. (Sevilla, 1895), Vol. 4: pp. 166–667. Métraux (JSAP 28: 190–194) says that the rectangular huts of the Aymára are built after Spanish patterns, and that only the chiefs at Chipaya used them, others building the older round type of house. The round style is useless, however, for tracing the provenience of the Uru: Braun noted Quechua storehouses of this kind in southwestern Bolivia, Nordenskiöld the same form among Aymára at Tunari, near Cochabamba (Otto Braun [Letter to Nordenskiöld in 1931]; Erland Nordenskiöld, *The*

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342 Another house type, beyond the rectangular-thatched and round-matted forms, is that to be found in several examples on the plain just to the north of Ancoaqui. These have a rectangular ground-plan, and instead of being thatched with grass or *totora*-mats, have a pyramidal "dome" corbelled of the same turfs that the walls are made. One of these photographed was on a slight artificial elevation, and had a shallow "moat" around it, possibly to provide dryness and drainage during the long rainy season. Another has two doors, both east and south, suggesting that shepherds might watch their llamas from these tiny huts, which are too small for family habitation; one of them has a chimney-hole in the roof.

Posnansky[19] says the Uru of Sojopaca built temporary shelters, apparently of mud, "like beavers," and figures a carefully domed *putuku* on the islet of Simillaque, as well as a round, stone-roofed house on the Isle of Panza. Uru round houses at Ancoaqui have vertical walls, but some of those of the Chipaya (Posnansky, Figs. 39 and 56) are battened inward, like truncated domes. On islands in the Desaguadero swamps I noticed temporary shelters of *totora* shaped like an old-fashioned straw beehive with a point, erected to shelter the *balsa*-builders.

326 *Food.* The Uru have repeatedly been referred to as being chiefly fishermen, but fish are by no means exclusively their diet. Their linguistic con-
327 geners to the south, the Chipaya, are chiefly pastoral, and the Uru likewise
328 have pigs, donkeys, some few chickens, sheep, and cows, but no llamas or alpacas. Of the cows Métraux writes:

> those on the border of the Desaguadero [have] become amphibian. They pass the whole day in the water browsing on aquatic plants. From a distance one would take them for buffalo in some Balkan marsh.

[311] These half-wild creatures are so "pastured" because of the acute lack of land among the Uru, whose agriculture,[20] for the same reason, is thus greatly circumscribed. The Uru have dogs, which they call *puku*. Like the Aymára, and most *altiplano* Indians, the Uru keep domesticated guinea-pigs in their houses. Pigs wander about the village also, but are sometimes placed in

[342] [317] [113] *Ethnography of South America seen from the Mojos of Bolivia* (Comparative Ethnographic Studies 3, Göteborg, 1924), p. 19; see also Bernabé Cobo, *Relaciones geográficas de Indias*, Vol. 2: p. 62; Huaman Poma de Ayala, in Means, *Peru and Overseas*, p. 188, Fig. 86 (in Métraux loc. cit.).

[19] Posnansky, *op. cit.*, pp. 68, 188 and Figures 104, 111.

[113] [20] George McCutchen McBride, *The Agrarian Indian Communities of Highland Bolivia* (American Geographic Society, Research Series 3, New York, 1921), p. 10, says the Uru "form the rare example of a highland Indian tribe which is not markedly attached to the soil, in contrast to the agricultural people that surround them."

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FIG. 2. The woman of Ancoaqui, Rio Desaguadero, Bolivia. Note style of headdress, Tiwanaku hair-style braided, dress, pottery and clutching

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earthen sties, or mud-and-stone conical huts. I observed no cats at Ancoaqui, though they occur in Aymára villages a day's journey hence.

Agriculture is unimportant among the Uru, although they cultivate *kañawa* (or "quinoa," Uru *kula*, a millet-like grain) from which they make a toasted ground powder they call *pitu*. It is pleasant tasting and is very concentrated and nourishing. They also cultivate a small amount of "papas amargas" or small, bitter potatoes from which they make *čuñu* (Uru *ounî*). The succulent white roots of the *totora* reed (*sulu*, *kauri*, or *kuima*) are commonly eaten raw by the Uru. These vegetable products they augment in their trading of fish to the Aymára.

Kañawa is ground on a stone slanting outward from the woman's lap with a flat stone bar, whence the ground grain collects in a cloth at the far, lower end. The Uru make a beer they call *likša* or *likši*, or *xawinshawia* according to Palavecino. Posnansky (page 102) says they sometimes make *chicha* of masticated maize also; *likši* is made from a plant called *kisuri* or *kisui*, which he supposes is aquatic. This same author considers the Uru somewhat more abstemious of alcohol than the Aymára but this is probably less a result of inclination than extreme poverty. This Bolivian student notes also as a food of the Uru "camaroncitos [?shrimp] transparentes" (Uru *koyčoya*), Amphipods of the group *Hyalella pallida*, *H. robusta*, etc. from two to ten millimeters long, which live in the *totora* roots. Toasted, these are a rich, nutritious food in times of scarcity, as well as an "estimulante sexual." The Uru chew *coca*, of course, as do all Andean natives, trading their fish for it with the "cholo" or halfbreed tradesmen who bring the narcotic leaf from the *yungas* or deep semi-tropical valleys of the Departamentos of La Paz and Cochabamba.

Fishing is the basis of Uru economy however, as it appears to have been throughout the period of European knowledge of them. Fishing by moonlight I was told is preferred on the low time. Fish fences, *kruša*, of *totora*-bundles stuck in the soft mud of the river bottom were observed several times in the Desaguadero. They are of the same type that is used in the swampy shallows of southern Lake Titicaca. Palavecino thus describes their construction:

> Each of these [bundles] is made of five or six reeds placed in the same direction and attached by the upper thinner part. They carry these bundles in their *balsas* to the place which appears to them best for fishing and there build their weir. To drive the bundles of *totora* into the mud they use the gaff (*ekrua*) with which they push their boats. [This is a stout pole with a stubby tripod at the base, so that it will catch on roots and water plants and not sink into the soft mud when the boat is poled along (W. Loh.)] The bundle is placed against the gaff, the end of which rests on the liga-

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ture of the bundle. The whole is thrust vertically into the earth. The end of the bundle emerges a few centimeters above the surface of the water. They repeat the operation until a sufficiently compact weir is raised to hold the fish. The barrier has the form of an angle which opens in the direction of the current. The two wings are straight or curved slightly inward. They end in an opening about a meter wide whose edges, more resistant than the rest of the weir, are made of two bundles 20cm. in diameter. Unlike the others, these bundles have transverse ligatures a few centimeters above the surface. Facing this passage there is generally an islet of *totora* which protects the weir from the wind and to which the fisherman can attach his *balsa*. Here he places the net. He watches the fish that are engaged between the two barriers and thus conducted toward the net which closes the weir.

The Uru also make their *totora* sails to their boats into tent-like shelters over themselves when fishing. To drive the fish into their weirs, they attach bunches of reeds to a pole and agitate the water up and down.

Cord nets attached to a frame are also used in Uru fishing. The frame of this type of net (called *kakpara*) is a tripod lashed at the divergent ends of the feet to a stick bent into a ring: these conical nets are quite large and about all one man can handle. Métraux further mentions a smaller rectangular-framed scoop net with a pole handle: "The Indian plunges this rectangular pocket into the water and remains standing or sitting until he sees interesting prey. He begins by lifting his net carefully, then pulls it out of the water with a rapid motion." The Uru also have large bottom-nets or drag-nets, which neither Métraux nor the author were able to see in use as they serve for fishing only in very deep water. These are trailed behind several *balsas*, their bottoms weighted with perforated stones, and require a number of persons to handle them.

In fishing for a species of *Trichomycterus* (*T. pictus*, Aymará *suli*), the Uru of the Desaguadero also use a spear, called *piri*, which has eight or so diverging spikes at its end on which the fish is impaled in shallow water.[8] Although fish are reasonably plentiful in Lake Titicaca and the Rio Desaguadero, Agassiz early noted the poverty in variety of the fauna: the genus *Orestias* of the family *Cyprinodontidae*, and the genus *Trichomycterus* of the family *Siluridae* comprise all the known species. The *Orestias* (= Aymará *suloja*, *ispi* = ? Uru *ulkertala*) are minuscule fish, viviparous, and of marked sexual dimorphism, which may account for the number and variety of

[8] Posnansky (pp. 77-78) believes that this term indicates affinities with Amazonian Arawaks, among whom the root *pir-* means "fish," as in the fish names: *piro-suka*, *piro-matsha*, *piro-ovara*, *piro-pitinga* ("painted fish"), *piro-arucú* ("red fish" of great size, which is dried like *charqui*), *piro-lapa*, *piro-coma* ("schools of fish"), *piraúa* (the terrible sharp-toothed fish of tropical rivers which attacks even humans), *piro-uassú* ("big fish"), *piracatinga* ("stinking fish"), *matapiri*, etc.

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native names for so exiguous a number of scientific varieties. These occur in the species: *O. Cuvieri, O. Pentlandi, O. Humboldti, O. Jurzivai, O. Bairdii, O. Orbignii, O. frontosus, and O. Nevesi.* Of the *Trichomycteri* (Aymara *suli, mauri;* Uru *tisi*) these species are present: *T. dispar Tschudi,* and *T. rivulatus.* Other native names for fish, which I have been unable to identify clearly with the scientific classifications are: (Aymará) *pri-lasa, pristeu, kuri-mauri, umanii, Kavali;* (Uru) *keri, tiz, lahi, ch'ula, lalkiri,* and *mak'lali* —whence it appears that the natives give separate names to the male and female of the same species.

Fish are preserved and prepared in several ways. The smaller kinds (*ispi, salala, ulkerlala*), salted and toasted, are carried and eaten dry on journeys. The larger varieties (*suli, mauri, tisi*) are salted, scaled, boned, and stretched out between stones in a slow, smoky fire, and thus smoke-dried are preserved for periods of scarcity, according to Posnansky. But what appears to be the same process, described by Palavecino, is evidently a method of *cooking:*

> These ovens, which the Uru call *wanko*, consist in a hole dug in the soil, whose depth, equal to the diameter, is about 60 cm. The rounded edge is raised at the surface of the ground, and the entire interior is plastered with clay. The Uru light a fire in it and introduce more or less flat stones. When the stones are incandescent, they take them out, all except those on the bottom. They lay on these a layer of fish, on which is placed a second bed of stones, then a layer of fish, and so on until the oven is full. It is closed with stones, and covered with reeds. The fish is thus cooked by steaming.

Métraux notes that this is a very ancient type of earth oven in South America.

Hunting is almost as important to the Uru as fishing, neither of which is basic in Chipaya economy. The river marshes abound with birds of many kinds: waterhens (*wesla, lokya*), ducks (*orgwa*), geese (*wajata*), loons (*palle*), herons (*ahili*), various diving birds and gulls; a large unidentified black bird they call *tiwanku* or *lilianku*. Other unidentified birds are: *lalita, kulawaina* (*waina* is Aymará for "youth, young man"), *alowa, lawani.* Of these aquatic birds, only the "hobo" (*palle*) is not hunted or eaten, because of its rank, oily flesh. Most frequently hunted is a kind of red duck called *p'owayan.*

The Uru hunt birds by several methods. Posnansky says men hunting alone in the early morning disguise themselves in bunches of reeds, slowly approach the birds who are still stupefied by the cold of the night, then, grabbing them by the feet, they quickly kill the birds by biting the head or twisting the neck. The Uru are able users of slingshots woven or braided of varicolored llama-wools, and they also use *bolas,* made with two large

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wooden balls and a small grooved, ovoid stone for the handgrip.* They have no firearms, nor have they ever possessed them apparently. The bow and arrow is likewise lacking; spears are used only in obtaining fish.

An interesting group-hunt at determined periods employs both men and sometimes women. They stretch in selected sites extensive nets, sometimes hundreds of meters long, for birds whose flight is near the surface of the water; the nets are extended below the surface also, to prevent the escape of diving birds. They anchor the nets to faggots or clumps of *totora* set in slightly curved lines. Then hunters in their *balsas* make much noise and frighten the birds into the almost invisible nets, where they can despatch them with clubs (*pokena*), and kill with their *balsa* those which attempt to escape. Uru also eat the eggs (*hiki*) of aquatic birds. The flesh of the birds is cut into strips, hung in the sun, and dried into a kind of *charqui* ("jerky," from the Aymará *ch'arki*).

The Uru do little hunting of land animals. Vicuñas (*Auchenia vicuña*; *sahuja*, a word obviously related to Aymará *kaja*, llama) are extremely scarce or absent, as are also guanacos. It is said, however, that in winters of very extreme cold* small groups of vicuñas may stray down into the Desaguadero region. The head male of the herd is lassoed, and the others of the herd, immobilized by the cold, are speedily killed. The small rodents of the pampas, like the viscacha (*ghital*), apparently are not hunted by the Uru. Most of the birds they kill, like a good proportion of the fish they catch, they take to the villages to trade for other food and necessary articles, since these are their sole source of revenue, beyond their balsa-making.

Material Culture. The stalks of the giant reed *totora* (a *Cyperaceous* plant, *Scirpus totora*) are surely the most important substance in Uru material culture: of them they make fish-weirs, supports for bird-nests, reed-mats, floor- and sitting-mats, rafters, doors, balsa-boats and their sails, and the few cattle they have browse upon the roots of the *totora* as well. Unless *balsas* are frequently removed from the water and thoroughly dried, they last scarcely longer than a year or two before rotting. The Uru *balsa*-builders are famous and supply many of their Aymara neighbors with them in the southwestern region of Lake Titicaca. The reeds must first be cut with

* An Uru bola from the Desaguadero is now in the possession of Dr Frank G. Speck, in his private collection at the University of Pennsylvania.

* The Aymara have a phrase to designate extreme cold or "bone-numbing" weather: *g'ala* ("snow"), *hiñuta* ("to split"), *sami* (verbal), *g'acota* ("makes icy"). I.e. weather cold enough to split stones and make the fluffy-wooled vicuña scream. The Aymara schoolboys in La Paz—according to my "chulo" (interpreter, the late Moisés Alvarez, who was one of them—have made a very effective football ("futbol") yell of this familiar phrase: *g'ala hiñuta sami g'acota, ara ara!*

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knives on the ends of poles, then stacked in shocks like corn, after they have been dried spread out in the sun. Nearly all able-bodied Uru males have quantities of these materials in various stages toward the manufacture of the complete boats. In their houses, even, in spare moments, men are continually braiding *ch'a*-grass into tough ropes to bind the boats together.

Though shaped like a boat, the *balsa* is of course actually a raft. A handful of reeds is bound together and repeatedly thickened with more reeds as the middle of the cigar-shaped element is reached, then tapered off again into a point. The only tool used in the manufacture of this is a wooden hook (*kayka*) with a handle at an acute angle to it, used to tighten the lashing of grass rope. A more tubular and thinner sheaf of reeds forms the keel of the *balsa*, and two of the fat cigar-shaped bundles are separately lashed to it, forming a sort of sea-sled type of hull, which cannot be overturned in a storm; the thinner ends of these cigar-shaped bundles are slightly raised fore and aft of the boat. To form gunwales, a still thinner and tubular sheaf of reeds is lashed (during its own round-and-round binding with braided grass rope) through the original lashing of the hull-elements. One of these gunwales (*pinda*) is placed on each side of the top of the hull-elements to prevent splashing of water onto the occupants of the boat as it is poled along. The Uru *balsa* thus differs from the Aymara[9] type in that its two large basic elements are lashed to a central "keel" and not to each other (though the bulwark lacings are similarly looped through the lacings of the two hull-elements); it has therefore five instead of four elements. The Uru also rig their *totora*-mat sails with a slight difference from the Aymara. Sails, however, can only be used on the Lake and on the open river "before the wind" since the boat has no center-board and cannot tack. In the narrow waterways a punt pole or gaff (*tabo*) with a stubby trident at its end is used to push the boat along. The wood for these comes from the yungas of the Cordillera Real's eastern, tropical slopes. (See Posnansky, *Fig.* 83.) A complete *balsa* cost in 1937 from ten to sixteen *bolivianos*, then worth about 1*d*.

Of the textiles we have already noted twined single-element totora balsa-sails, twined many-element mattress-mats of reed, fish- and bird-nets (which they themselves make of cord obtained in Guaqui from La Paz), and single-element twined reed mats of totora. Métraux has an excellent description (page 86) of the preparation by soaking, pounding, and rolling of the wiry grasses of the region (*Stipa ichu*, *Festuca orthophylla*, and *F. dis-*

[9] Lorenzo D. Parodi, *Los balsas usadas por los Aymaras en el lago Titicaca* (Physis, Revista de la Sociedad argentina de ciencias naturales, Vol. 11, Buenos Aires, 1932), pp. 165-169. Métraux' description (*BAE Jr.* 94) is of the Aymara type.

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ch'ewa) for the manufacture of gram rope. This I noted was of two kinds, depending on its use: three-element braid for *bolas*, two-element true rope for twining the several kinds of mats, called *tawara*. The women make simple baskets too, or did until recently. These the women sell, as they do all other articles they manufacture.

The women spin (*pununa*) llama-wool (*punñi*) as incessantly as the men make gram rope. Usually they use a whorl or spindle, weighted with the yarn already spun wound around it, sometimes freely suspended as they walk along the road to market, sometimes with a bowl when sitting; but they spin between the palms also. This yarn they weave (*wat"[i]*) into a coarse cloth on simple tension looms staked to the ground. Both men's and women's clothing is made of this native homespun. I was told that the Uru do not weave so much as formerly, because of an obscure superstition that "it will go bad with them after death"; but I observed several looms in operation at Ancoaqui. The cloth is woven and rolled on one of the end bars until nearly all the warp is used up; then the weaving is done from the far end leaving an open space which is filled in with a large needle after the heald-rod is removed. That is, they weave from one end, and when nearly finished, they weave from the other. Only women use the native ground loom and the men the colonial Spanish crude foot loom. There were none of the latter in operation at Ancoaqui during my stay but the adobe frame of one foot loom observed was similar to those of the Aymára. The women's wide girdles or *fajas* are woven on looms also. The colors of the cloth are usually black or natural wool color but sometimes they buy modern coal-tar dyes for brighter colors in their coca-sacks and the like.

Knitting is probably not pre-Columbian, at least in the current styles, but the women are very skilful in knitting *gorros* of the Aymára type (Uru *Ikava*), often with amazingly intricate animal figures and other designs. The men's slingshots are made of llama wool also, circular-braided in a number of very pleasing designs like the markings on snakes.[9] The felted wool hats I believe are not made by the Uru, but bought from the Aymára at Guaqui, Tiahuanacu and elsewhere. The Uru, however, do make thongs of twisted rawhide with the fur left on, as well as heavy "sogas" or woolen ropes for lashing burdens on llamas and donkeys. The Uru *bolas* (Aymará *lloci*, Uru *K'oki*) use cords unlike those of the slingshots which are woven,

[9] Bandelier wrote (*The Islands of Titicaca and Koati*, New York, 1910) that there are no snakes on the *altiplano* whatsoever, but we killed a small one on the site of Bennett's diggings at Lacrumarca on the southern shore of Lake Titicaca. It was about 18" long, with greenish-gray spots on its back. It is called *auiro* in Aymará and grows to two or three feet in length.

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FIG. 3. Making an Uru balsa, Arcosqui, Bolivia.

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whereas the *bolas* have tightly wound cotton thread (bought from Aymára traders) around the cords (see Posnansky, Fig. 90). As has been pointed out, the word for "clothes" in general is very much like the word for "skin," suggesting a pretextile substance for this purpose in earlier times. No information was obtained on any tanning process, however. Leather sandals, *čala* (an Aymará word), are not universally used.

An extremely interesting textile, apparently unique to the region southeast of Lake Titicaca, is a kind of feather-cloth. David Forbes described this in 1870 for the Aymára, but my repeated inability to check it for this group leads me to believe that the art was really Uru. This art was the spinning of the down of lake birds into a thread, which was then knit into *garros*. The Berlin Museum has a specimen of these. Dr Krickeberg, who studied it, believed the idea of making thread from bird-down is ancient but that the knitting is European in origin.[9]

The Uru know no metallurgy of any kind, though the Aymára of Jesus de Machaca, a day's journey overland to the east are famous for their metal casting. Some of the "topos" (Uru *toskola* [cf. the term for penis, *siäi-*("eggs") *skola*]) used by the women to pin their clothing at the shoulder are probably generations old, and some may have been recovered from the ancient *čulpa* graves.

Pottery is no longer made at Ancoaqui, though there is plenty of evidence, archaeological and otherwise, that this was not always the case. Opilvie, in point of fact, noted a water jar "made of clay dug from a bank near by," so that the non-practice of pottery-making is possibly a recent thing—evidence, like the decline of weaving and basket-making, of the final decadence of Uru culture. Plain reddish round-bodied *ollas* with a narrow neck and a small handle at the top, and crudely made but large hemispherical bowls (up to 18" across the top) with a bent-out lip and two small loops as handles were, however, noted; these may have been made at Ancoaqui, as they are much cruder even than modern Aymára ceramics of the region.

Flat grinding-stones with long mullers, together with hammers (*hapoka*) for all purposes (a roundish stone lashed with rawhide to a stick, illustrated in Posnansky's Figure 81) are the only objects made of stone, except the handle end of the *bola*, and the sinkers for fish-nets.

Weaving frames, distaffs and spindles, *balsa*-poles, spear-handles, the wooden *balsa*-making hook (*hayla* or '*hayá*), and a few other small articles are the only objects made of wood, which is very valuable and extremely

[9] Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 262, says this down yarn was knit into children's socks and gloves. Cf. Métraux (JSAP 27, pp. 86-87; 28, pp. 196) and Posnansky, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

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difficult to come by in this treeless region. Some poles are obtained from sheltered valleys near the Lake, the rest of the wood from the Yungas of La Paz.

Hunting weapons are limited to fish spears (*piri*) and *balsa* (Huss), though nets and weirs are also used in hunting and fishing. The bow and arrow is unknown to the modern Uru, though there is archaeological evidence that it is not unknown to the Bolivian *altiplano*.

Musical instruments of the Uru are merely an incomplete list of those in use among the neighboring Aymára. They are the *siku* (a kind of double panpipe, with four rows of graduated reeds fastened together into two groups of two rows each), the *poko* (Aymará *pusi'ña*, lit. "four holes"), the *qena* (another Aymára flute, with six stops, five in a row and one on the side), and the drum (Uru *p'ou*). The reeds of which these are made are not *totora*, but come from a noded bamboo-like plant in the *yungas*. The *siku* is played with the two parts held together vertically, like an ordinary panpipe, the *pusi'ña* or *poko* and the *qena* with the instrument held in front of the chest, at a downward angle, like a clarinet. All the categories of musical instruments have their appropriate use in ceremonies with a definite position on the calendar. They are played in groups of one kind only, never mixed orchestrally save with the drum.

Economically, the only articles of importance of Uru production are fish, *balsas*, and large *totora*-mats (or *llenos*, for carpets in "cholo" huts). These are exchanged for *kaka*, *coca*, net-thread, *kokawa* (quinoa), and the few other indispensables of Uru life.

The sexual division of labor is the following: men—fishing, hunting, net-making and -repairing, the cutting of *totora* and all the processes in the manufacture of *balsas*, mat-making (*llenos* and *lawara*), the playing of musical instruments, and the making of their own tools; women—spinning and weaving llama-wool, cooking, and formerly pottery-making and basket-making. Only women use the simple loom, and only men the foot-loom. The chief leisure-time activity of the men is grass rope twisting or braiding (Posnansky, quite unaccountably, and I am sure mistakenly, says the women gather the grass and make the cords for the *balsas*), while that of the women is spinning llama wool. Women are the traders of everything save *balsas*. Their meager agriculture and herding are common to both sexes; children commonly care for the animals.

Social Organization. The best information we have on the social organization of the Uru is that of Métraux:

> The information which I have gathered on their social organization is unfortunately very inexplicit. They are divided into clans, the list of which was dictated to me: [illegible]

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they are, Titicana, Kenko, Kasa, Koipa. The group is also divided into two moities: aman-saya and mana-saya; their Uru names are ti aini, ainaita. They may be translated by their Aymara equivalents: "upper section" and "lower section."

Posnansky adds information for the Uru of Iruita:

In the village of Iruita may be noted—although somewhat blurred at the present time, as with the "markas" of the Aymara—the typical division into *Anansaya* and *Urinsaya* (*Manansaya* and *Aransaya*) which they call *Manko* and *Aruju*. However, the real *Manansaya* for them is the *Titicana-Tujus*, where the Aymaras live, to the east, in the high and mountainous lands. The expression *tujus* has in their language the meaning "man of the *sierra fuera*" (sierra seca).[47]

Kinship System. I collected the following kinship system at Ancoaqui:

father = apai
brother = tiitai
son = ampuwa
husband = kakwawa
older brother = tuskallit
middle brother = moranlit
younger brother = alkallik
father of father = tsampalani, tapaspalai
mother of father = ajanna

father of wife = alitai
mother of wife = tatalama
brother of wife = atalallti
sister of wife = amai
brother of father = ailiat, tololo
sister of father = nai
cousin (male) = [an]tololo, tuktololo
brother-in-law = wani
husband of sister = tiaammatalako
son-in-law = wani
son of son = alli [?Aymara], kawa
son of daughter = ulusa
son of brother = tilli-awa
son of sister = tilliawa

mother = atalai
sister = kaiyo
daughter = takuawaa-ca
wife = takuawawa
older sister = kuttakinai
middle sister = moranai
younger sister = alkinai
father of mother = tatala-ap
mother of mother = [ajata-lama, ajanna
father of husband = tsanaya
mother of husband = tapanna
brother of husband = tiitai
sister of husband = tip'i
brother of mother = ailiat
sister of mother = nai
cousin (female) = malaya
sister-in-law = nai

daughter-in-law = wani
daughter of son = takua-alli
daughter of daughter = ulusa
daughter of brother = tilliimat
daughter of sister = tilipanni.

male baby, little boy = ol-lam-kala, ulusa, ukala; little boy = ol usa; boy = usa; youth = kuk usa; young man = towi, tuu; man (homo) kalli, (vir) tuna.

[47] Mitmaes (JSAP 27), p. 87. Cf. also (JSAP 27), pp. 91, 108, 107. Posnansky, *op. cit.* p. 70.

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female baby, little girl = uč-tukun-wawa, kun wawa, tukun-wawa šu; young girl = pax-pak-uš; young woman = ux.

Marriage. Marriage nowadays is solemnized with the rites of the Bolivian Catholic Church, if at all. There is a tradition that formerly couples were married standing in the water of the Lake back to back. Marriage is patrilocal, if this term has any meaning for a group like the Uru. More male than female children are born to the Uru, which is curiously the case with other ichthyophagous groups as well. Uru men commonly take Aymára women to wife, which accounts for the great acculturation in the direction of this tribe nowadays. A kind of *Amphipod* (*Hialella pallida*), transparent, and two to ten millimeters long, found at the roots of *totora* plants, is considered to be an aphrodisiac when toasted, according to Posnansky.

Political Organization. If the Uru at any time in the past ever had a tribal chieftain of any kind, the institution has long since disappeared. At present the organization of the group politically is the same as the compromise between ancient Aymára and colonial Spanish officials which is in effect elsewhere in the *altiplano*. The village "mayor" (Aymará *kilacata*, commonly called *ilacata* by the whites—from the Spanish *alcalde*?) is called in Uru *čapsti* or *xoraturčiki* ("wearer of the necklace," from his insignium of office, a necklace). This official is "elected" yearly. The regional ranking official or *corregidor* at Jesus de Machaca is called *čauk čapsti* ("big čapsti"). Squabbles with Aymára neighbors are led by the *kilacata*. Anciently, it is said, Uru women accompanied the men into battle.

Dances and Ceremonies. Bertonio[25] lists several ancient Uru dances of the 16th century which have since disappeared: the *kuchku* (*kuču*) or *si:a quirkitha* (*kirkič'a*), and the *chiy-chiy*, in which "chuspas" (bags) or "gualquepos" are held in the hand. The chief Uru "fiesta" of today is that of the vernal equinox, which the Spanish missionaries moved from the 23rd to the 14th of September that the date might coincide with the Christian feast of the Exaltation. On this date they play *sikus*, sing and dance the "mimule," and practice the ancient pagan rite of the *vilaača* (<*wila*, Aymará "blood"?). The *pusip'ia* and *qena* flutes are played at the dance of *Taurila* on the date of Espiritu; the costumes for this dance are a little white apron or "sabanilla," a "poyo" or plumed hat, the "panisa" or "panasilla" (a collar of feathers), and the *kawa* or tunic, white for men and brown or black for women. The "mimule" and "taurila" are said to be like dances of the Chiriguana.

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[25] Bertonio, *Vocabulario* 2, pp. 84 and 161. Other information, Posnansky *op. cit.*, p. 103.

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Religion. Nothing remains of Uru religion which is identifiably non-Aymára. In a swamp north of the village of Ancoaqui I noted an offering to some power or other, which consisted of three bowls, one over the other, in the reeds. Like the Aymára, the Uru believe in the interpreted significance of dreams.[39] The three- or four-stepped adobe pyramids in Ancoaqui I am unable to place as either an Hispanicism or an ancient survival; Posnansky would accept them as evidence of Arawakan affinities of the Uru. There are four or five of these at Ancoaqui. One has a cross atop it: the *cura* from Guaqui makes rare visits to the town.

According to Posnansky, the Uru have the following gods: *Ťuristatio* (= Aymara *Ťunupa?*, = a sun-god?), *Kjotsomptái* (a god of the Lake from Aymara *q'ota*, "lake"), *Ťukun-uuvo-somptái* (the goddess of the Lake), *Palani-somptái-malku* (god of fishes, from Aymara *malku*, "lord, master, chief"), *Čep-kaluari-čiči* (god of potatoes), *Kjosi-somptái* (god of the earth) and *Somptái-malku* ("god of the ancestors"). The willingness of this author to indulge in pure fantasy, however, leads us to be cautious even about such an etymologically plausible list. Métraux says that "Tout ce qui, dans ce mémoire [of Posnansky] concerne la religion actuelle des Uro est du domaine de la fantaisie," and avers that the chief deity of the Urus is *Pachamama*, an earth goddess of the Aymára. Near the door of every hut is a spot of blood, souvenir of the sacrifice made to the spirit of the place when the house is roofed; potatoes, alcohol, and *coca* are offered to the gods and *Pachamama*.

Mythology. The Uru appear to have preserved a few of their own traditions and myths. One of these,[40] however, appears to check with an ancient folk-tale preserved by Betanzos:

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[39] The Uru of Ancoaqui, quite surprisingly, believe in the superstition of "three-on-a match." This is said to be only as old as the Crimean War, when cigarettes first began to be popular: a match lit long enough to light three cigarettes gave enemy marksmen an opportunity to shoot the smokers, hence the "bad luck" of lighting three cigarettes on one match. If this is the true explanation, it is amazing how the practice came so quickly to the isolated Uru. However, in a world increasingly integrated, the discovery of South Africa copper reserves and subsequent fall of the price of copper on the New York Stock Exchange intimately affects the religious life of the Uru of the Desaguadero swamps, for when the great American copper mines in Bolivia (American Smelting at Corocoro, subsidiary of the Guggenheim interests) shut down, the Aymára miners cannot buy Uru fish, and the Uru cannot then buy quinoa and *coca*. And *coca* is an indispensable ritual substance in nearly all Uru ceremonies.

[40] Posnansky, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-85. Métraux (JSAP 27, p. 88) gives a version of the same Uru tale, of which he got a more complete example from the Chipaya: "Formerly there was a cataclysm which annihilated all humanity, with the exception of the Uru. This is why they speak a language different from that of other Indians. Tuhuanaru and its temple existed before the sun was created. They had been built by the Inca. When the sun appeared in the sky, the temple and Tiahuanaco fell down."

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We the Kjotuñi [q'otoñi, from Aymará q'oto, "lake", and Uru Iuñi, "men people"]* are the oldest on this earth. A long time we were here, before when the sun was hidden.

Here where you see the salt, in the time of our *Achichic* [ancestors], everywhere there was water with many fish; many rivers rose and flowed. Then our nation was large and happy.

Before the Sun hid himself for a long time we were in this place. Then the Kollas [Aymára] came, despoiling us of our lands; they used our bodies for *Kjuskoy* [kuto, human sacrifice] when they laid the foundations of their temples.

When the Lake dried up we came out in search of food and thus encountered the Aymára.

Before *Comak-pata* [Aymará, "time or epoch of darkness"] Tiahuanacu was built.

We have built our houses where our ancestors lived. The broken pots of many colors, and *tepos* [copper pins] you find when plowing the ground, belong to them.

Métraux recorded in Quechua at Oruro a myth which tells of the tricking of the armadillo by the fox, who misled him concerning a fiesta; hence (say the Uru) the mantle of the armadillo is uneven on his neck and shoulders. Most of the Uru-Chipaya tales were learned from the Aymára.

Miscellaneous Ethnographic Notes. Small children own property which cannot be sold without their consent; when a little girl refused to sell me a small cloth, in spite of my offering what must have appeared a fabulous sum, that was the end of it.

In greeting a white man on the road, the Uru, like the Aymára address him as *Wiracocha*, "sir," or *kurai* "mister."

The Pleiades are called *kurkuru*, Venus *kuak-kuia* ("big-I"), the Milky Way *kutu-tikitai* (from *tika* "road"?) and another constellation *tuscuscu*; a comet is called *mallale* (from the Aymará).

* Not, as Posnansky supposes, from the Aymará *suñi*, "puna." The remaining "uru" is again obvious from the reference in the second paragraph. Further, the phoneme *t* is lacking in Aymará.